



Beekeepers Association of the ACT

**Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the
Australian Capital Territory Incorporated**

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Meetings of our Association are conducted on the third Thursday of every month (except December) at the Yarralumla Primary School Hall, 24 Loftus Street, YARRALUMLA, ACT 2600

Contact: President - Cormac Farrell (0422) 441 358

Email: enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au
www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

<https://www.facebook.com/BeekeepersAssociationoftheACT>

May 2017

**Monthly meeting: 18 May 2017, Yarralumla Primary School
at 7:30pm**

AGENDA

1930 Introduction & Welcome: President (Cormac Farrell)
1935 Beeginners Corner
1945 Presentation: Top Bar Hive primer (Jon Justin)
2030 Networking (light supper)
2100 Meeting close

Secretary: Phil Andrews (0408 539 579)

President's Report

Dear Members,

Thanks to all the members who made it to the Annual General Meeting last month to elect a new committee. We have a nice mixture of existing committee members and new blood in the committee for the coming year. This is really important, and we will keep making opportunities to get members involved through the sentinel hive program and a regular series of beekeeping mornings at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands apiary. Thanks to everyone who nominated. I'm looking forward to the year ahead.

Our hives might be all packed down for winter, but there is still plenty to do. Winter is traditionally the time to check our gear, re-paint, build new hives and generally get ready for the coming season. The nice bonus for Canberra is that the minus five mornings also kill wax moth quite nicely!

One of the things that we have been focusing on in the monthly meeting speaker program is the different hive types that are available in Australia. Apart from a basic functional requirement to have removable frames for disease detection, there is a lot of freedom to use different hive designs.

This month we are hearing from Jon Justin about Top Bar Hives.

I have been helping the ANU Beekeepers manage one of their top bar hives this season, and is a really fun way to keep bees. This style of hive also features in both our demonstration apiary at Jerrabomberra Wetlands and at the new apiary at Parliament House.

We are often asked what is the best hive design, and there is no one 'correct' answer to this – it is very much a personal choice and will influence your style of beekeeping. With this talk we will have covered two of the three main hive types, with a talk on Warre hives in a few months. Our aim is to inform people about the available hive designs, so that when spring rolls around and the swarms are buzzing that members have had a chance to think over what their next hive might be.

It is all about the central mission of ACT Beekeepers – to foster good practice, and support new beekeepers in choosing the right hive for them, and providing further education for the more experienced keepers. Hope to see you there to debate the pros and cons of each hive, and help us all choose our next hive (or three)!

Regards,

Cormac Farrell, President



Biosecurity update

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council Inc. (AHBIC) has approved the **Third Australian Bee Congress** to be held at Royal Pines on the Gold Coast Queensland from **27 June to 30 June 2018**. The theme for the Congress will be "Pollination and Beekeeping for the Future". Previous congresses have been held on the Gold Coast in 1972 and 1988; it's undeniable that this congress is well over due. A National Conference Committee has been established, chaired by Ben Hooper.

"My Committee is working towards providing a program that is both educational and empowering, especially in the field of providing pollination services." Ben Hooper said. "So at this time we would ask you to put the date in your diary for 2018 and spread the word to all beekeepers, both here in Australia and overseas."

Just a reminder: Any unusual plant pest should be reported immediately to the relevant state or territory agriculture agency through the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881)**.

Early reporting increases the chance of effective control and eradication.

Taken from the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council website

Introducing your committee

Over the next few editions, we'll get to know our new committee members as they introduce themselves and settle into their new roles.

David Segal

I'm a new beekeeper living in Flynn who got involved with ACTBKA in 2017. I'm amazed at the size of the membership and keen just to help out in whatever way I can, which is why I volunteered.

I currently have one Langstroth hive which is the result of a merger to get them through winter. In Spring I plan to split them into 4 nucs.

I work in a non-secular pastoral care role as Head of Ursula Hall at the Australian National University. I also have a mental health training business - mhist.com where I run Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Intervention Skills.



The Club hive management team

Christine Joannides

Christine has a Masters of Science Communication. Says Christine: 'In October last year I signed up to be part of the club Sentinel Hive program and also joined the hive buddy program. Through these activities I have learnt hands-on beekeeping from experienced beekeepers. In March this year I bought my first hive at our field day'.

Christine spent eight years working at the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). RIRDC that administers and publishes honey bee and pollination R&D papers. In working there, she developed a keen interest in honeybee and pollination research. As part of her ANU Masters of Science Communication she prepared a mini-thesis looking at how Australian beekeepers obtain information about pests and diseases and specifically on the *Varroa* mite, and identifying gaps in available resources.

Alan Wade

Alan is a landscape ecologist and has a Certificate of Apiculture – thanks Doug Sommerville – and was a club instigator in the dim dark past. Since then he has run a little show, **Beeblebox Apiaries**, named after the hero of Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy. We won't go on but it is rumoured that two queen hives and raising queen bees were small asides in his many years among the bees. Beeblebox honey labels says it all ~ *Since 1980*.

Alan has acquired a modicum of hands on skills from many seasoned and skilful beekeepers: Ralph Chambers, Noel Clare, Herb Waldie, Jeff Matsen, Frank Derwent and Dick Johnston amongst others.



Alan Wade's Beeblebox Hives, battened down for winter



Get involved with the Club hives

Every club member is welcome to come along to help or just to find out how to set up a hive and to gain the confidence to lift the lid of a real live hive.

Give us a bell or chat to us at club meetings. We will put you on the club contact list so we can keep you up with what's on and when.

Alan Wade

alanlynnwade@me.com

+61 4 1777 5201

Christine Joannides

christine.joannides@gmail.com

+61 4 1221 4632



Bee Buzz Box - Hive management report

Wondering what's happening at the club apiary?

Well not much. Well not at present. We are on the cusp of winter and the healthy bees Jeff Matsen and Frank Derwent left us with are now hunkering down with their precious summer stores.

Right now, these colonies, better referred to as 'superorganisms', are steadily downsizing to avoid having to feed too many hungry mouths.

The last of the emerging brood will comprise diutinus, long-lived, bees that will guard the queen and stores over the long haul through to early spring.

*... And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.*

John Keats *Ode To Autumn*

Training online brings beekeepers up to standard

From [Plant Health Australia news](#)

A new online training course was launched by the [Australian Honey Bee Industry Council](#) (AHBIC) and Plant Health Australia this week, to make it easy for beekeepers to find out how to care for honey bees in accordance with the new [Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice](#).

The [Biosecurity for Beekeepers course](#) explains why biosecurity is important to beekeepers, describes the main pest threats to hives and shows how to check hives for any sign of pests that can reduce bee numbers.

It is designed for people with a basic understanding of beekeeping practices, and all beekeepers will find it helpful.

AHBIC chairman, Lindsay Bourke, said that the course coincides with the introduction of the new Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice so that all beekeepers can learn about the Code's requirements and make sure that their practices meet the Code.

"All commercial beekeepers are encouraged to complete the course," said Mr Bourke.

"It's free if you're a commercial beekeeper – you just need to get online and enter the token code provided by your state or territory government. Token codes will be rolled out over coming weeks."

"Hobby beekeepers will benefit from Biosecurity for Beekeepers as well," Mr Bourke added, "and for them the cost is \$20 – a worthwhile investment."

Plant Health Australia honey bee biosecurity project officer Michael Holmes said that the course is straight forward and gives beekeepers all they need to know.

"It should take around 90 minutes to do the course, and it can be done in more than one sitting," Dr Holmes said.

"Once completed, there's a short test to fill in, and then you get a certificate to demonstrate that you are qualified in procedures under the new Code."



Special interest group on native bees

If you would like to participate in this group or make a suggestion, contact me at peterabbott@iinet.net.au or on 0421 227 315.

Peter Abbott
Native Bee SIG Coordinator

Bee rescue

by Juli Poole

What can be done about a swarm that got away and is now well established in your front yard plum tree?

Jim Calokerinos, Dick Johnston and **Stuart Robertson** mounted a bee rescue operation before the tree lost its leaves and made the hive visible to the neighbours.

Given the lateness of the season, it was decided to fit the whole hive into a bottom box and super, without any frames.

No attempt was made to break the comb or distribute it across frames.

With a bit of trimming, the hive fitted nicely into the box. The bees quickly adjusted to the new arrangement, using the 'front door' opening to access the hive almost as soon as the lid had been placed on top.



The boxed hive was collected at dusk, with all the bees safely inside.

As the number of bees had shrunk considerably compared to the number in the hive over summer, it will be combined with an existing hive.

I have to put in my vote for the swarm queen to get the top job, as these bees were very gentle!



Thanks to Jim and Dick for showing how this might be tackled, and Stuart taking such great photos.



Can mushrooms save bees?

by Juli Poole

Mycologist Paul Stamets (Fungi Perfecti) and entymologist Steve Sheppard (Washington State University) certainly think so.

They started working on a mushroom solution to be fed to bees under attack from the varroa mite (see [YouTube April 2017](#)). The aim was to kill the viruses that the mite spreads or boost the bees' immunity. Click on the picture to see more about their research.



One particular mushroom was selected for its spores resistance to high temperatures and virulence against the viruses spread by the varroa mite.

A mushroom extract solution added to sugar syrup fed to bees is currently being tested in what is claimed to be the biggest bee hive experiment in the world, with 532 hives involved.

The premise Paul Stamets puts forward that answers to many of our environmental problems lie in the humble fungi, is just another reason, if one is really needed, for protecting our old growth forests. These are the places where diversity of fungi are found. We still know so very little about them, but we are losing so many species as these places are destroyed.

Closer to home, has anyone had experience of their bees or beehives' proximity to fungi enhancing bee health?

Some good news at last in the battle against varroa mite

References:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_lqIUION1s

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/beehives-made-of-mushrooms-could-save-colonies-from-collapse/>

Newsletter content and feedback

Have your say about what you'd like to see reported, contribute pictures and articles, or just give feedback!

Go to our website below, select 'Forums' on the left-hand side of the menu, and then 'Members forum'. Respond to the topic: Newsletter articles.

We'd love to hear from you!

Your editors: Juli and Stuart



online

Our website: www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

It's all there in one handy location: information, news, forums and links. Register to take part in the forum discussions, ask a question or provide advice.

Have you taken a look?

More photos and information from our [forum](#) at the [website](#) or [Facebook](#)

Classifieds

HOST A HIVE

The developers of the popular swarmpatrol.com web site, which now has over 2000 beekeepers subscribing from all over the world, recognised the need to assist beekeepers to go online with their products. After some 18 months of research and development, finally the hostahive.com web site was launched.

Hostahive is a specialised online marketplace for beekeepers. Each member can sign up in one of 3 different categories and set up their own very simple e-store. The categories provide a convenient method of catering to the different needs of beekeepers. Such an e-store can contain just products for sale or both products and services. A unique feature of the services part, which is very specific to beekeepers, is that service pricing can be based on the distance required to travel to the clients. The typical services that beekeepers provide are regular hive inspections, hive rental or leasing, pollination, mentoring, training or setting up and assisting with maintaining the popular Flow Hives.

Hostahive provides the latest fully secure e-commerce gateways, which means the beekeeper does not have to have credit card merchant facilities and the proceeds of any sale go into the beekeeper's account the same or next day depending on the time the purchase was made. The credit card and gateway fees, which can be quite substantial, are picked up by Hostahive and are included in the commission charged for the sales. Hostahive charges 15% for product sales and 10% for services. If postage is charged, no commission is charged on the postage fees.

Once a regional coverage of beekeepers is available with products, major promotion will be done in the region to make the consumer market aware of Hostahive and other affiliate sites which will be connected, so as to stimulate the sales.

Encouraged with the response to the system, Hostahive will be working closely with local beekeeping clubs and associations to help them market their member products. Customers on the other hand, can search out a beekeeper selling just the product they want within a certain distance from their place. They can search by a specific category such as honey or wax products and so on. Finding a local beekeeper to buy from, guarantees they will get raw untreated honey directly from the hive from their regional flora. This apparently has major health benefits for people with springtime allergies. By eating local honey, you become exposed and desensitised to local pollen and so decrease the allergic reaction.

The first 100 founding members of Hostahive will enjoy 6 months of free membership. Hostahive is happy to discuss close working relationships with bee clubs.

Sign up now to <https://hostahive.com>, set up your products in your e-store and start selling.

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